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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/03/2021
TAGS: EFIN IS PREL PTER UNDP
SUBJECT: MINIMIZING UN CONTACTS WITH HAMAS

REF: STATE 66100 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Ambassador Alex Wolff for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Ambassador Wolff transmitted reftel guidance May 3 to UN Deputy Secretary General Malloch Brown laying out guidelines for contacts by UN agencies with Hamas. Amb. Wolff added that this issue remained of the utmost importance and sensitivity to the U.S., and a breach of these guidelines would have serious consequences. Noting that the guidelines on contacts with Hamas may be seen by the UN as leaving room for interpretation, Amb. Wolff underscored that there should be no contacts at the political level with Hamas-led ministries.

¶2. (C) While expressing appreciation for the U.S. response, Malloch Brown noted that Hamas was trying to make adherence to such guidelines difficult by insisting that contacts by UNRWA with lower level officials were insufficient to get certain tasks accomplished. He also noted that UNDP's work often required direct contact with senior government officials. Amb. Wolff responded that it would be best to consult with us on such issues in advance. Malloch Brown said that seeking approval from the U.S. could be damaging to the UN's ability to perform its tasks. He cited also a recent meeting between the UNRWA Director and the Israeli Foreign Minister, despite a previous meeting between UNRWA and the Palestinian Minister for Refugee Affairs, suggesting that the Israelis were being more flexible on this point. Amb. Wolff said that the potential consequences of UN transgressions, including an end to funding by the U.S. of certain UN programs, were sufficiently serious that the UN would do well to consider how best to manage this issue with us. Malloch Brown concluded by saying he thought there should be further discussions within the Quartet on this matter as the situation evolved.

BOLTON